Dewan's reply.—However much the policy of Government to withdraw gradually from the expenditure connected with the improvement of towns might be criticised, Government must adhere to it. This policy is accepted all the world over and is definitely laid down in the new Municipal Regulation. If any particular improvement is beyond the resources of a particular Municipality, Government may be expected to render some help, but it is the duty of the Municipalities to carry out ordinary improvements themselves as far as possible. We can examine these requests only in the light of that policy.

91. The present requirements of the Municipal Council, Vaikam.

Mr. S. Subrahmanya Pillai (Member, Municipal Council, Vaikam) first urged the necessity for improving the Kaniyanthodu and said that the required land could be had without payment of compensation and that Government should undertake the deepening of the canal. He next referred to the improvement of the Perunchilavu, Kadichalai and Anthakara thodus in the interests of agriculture and transport. He also referred to the dangerous condition of the bridge over the Puthenthodu and prayed for its early repair. His next request was for the construction of two additional canals across the town, opening into the Vembanad lake, in the interests of sanitation and of trade. Lastly, he prayed for the transfer to the Municipality of the four roads leading from the Vaikam temple together with the maintenance grant for the same.

Dewan's reply.—In regard to the works referred to, the Member will do well to show them to me when I next visit the place. As for the transfer of major roads and their maintenance grants to the Municipality, the matter will be considered when the Municipality sends up its resolution on the subject.

92. Public health in Travancore, its present condition and the need for investigation and the devising of remedial measures.

Mr. K. N. Padmanabhan Pillai (Member, Municipal Council, Padmanabhapurom) observed that the vital statistics as at present prepared in the State were unreliable. They were also inadequate in that they did not contain information about the causes of death from diseases other than cholera and small-pox. Coming to the Medical department, he pointed out that the accommodation in hospitals was poor and the attention given to out-patients was inadequate. He suggested that these defects should be removed and that every hospital furnished with a laboratory to attend to bacteriological and pathological work. The Member deplored the absence of a sufficient number of graduates in the Sanitary department and said that the work turned out by that department was quite unsatisfactory.

The Member complained that the Municipalities were also not giving adequate attention in the matter of sanitation and prevention of diseases. Several kinds of diseases had come to stay in most of the municipal towns; scarcity of water was a standing grievance. The situation, in his opinion, was serious and immediate steps should be taken to remedy the evils. He prayed Government to take up the question of sanitation of schools and as a first step he suggested periodical medical inspection of school children. He also urged the establishment of a large number of maternity and children's hospitals all over the State. In conclusion, the Member drew the attention of Government to the following suggestions:—

1. Drinking should be discouraged.
2. Hotels, tea shops, &c., should be inspected and kept under control.
3. Vaccination should be made compulsory.
4. Beggars should not be allowed to roam about.
5. Work in the public offices should not be done late in the evening.

Dewan's reply.—You have traversed the whole field of public health and medical aid. I must say that you have drawn too gloomy a picture and that your state of mind is such that anything said on behalf of Government would not appeal to you. You probably think that no good can come out of Government. Government cannot claim perfection and the improvement of public health involves a perpetual struggle against ignorance and against those unclean propensitites to which

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